



Newsletter

Overseas Telecommunications Veterans Association

Registered Address PO Box 8, George's Hall, NSW 2198

Tom Barker, President
6 Rackham Crescent, Burrill Lake NSW 2539
Telephone. 4455 1403
Email: tombarker@shoal.net.au

Will Whyte, Secretary
Telephone. 9342 5088 (Bus)
Email: will.whyte@cwo.com.au

Bernie White, Treasurer
20 George Crescent Georges Hall NSW 2198
Telephone. 9727 9997
E-mail : evenbern@telstra.easymail.com.au

Allan Hennessy, Data Records
38 Cairns Street, Riverwood NSW 2210
Telephone. 9534 2237
Email: allanrh@ozemail.com.au

Laurie, McIlree, Subscriptions
Telephone. 9339 6923 (Bus)
C/ Telstra
7/363 Oxford Street, Paddington 2021
Email : Laurie.McIlree@team.telstra.com

Fred Kannard, Membership Applications
23 Lyne Road Cheltenham 2119
Telephone. 9342 9077 (Bus)
Email : fred.kannard@cwo.com.au

David Charrett, Website
1 Maitland Street, Killara NSW 2071
Telephone. 9418 1361
Email: charrett@mpx.com.au

Ray Hookway, Archives
9/38 Cleand Road, Artarmon 2064
Telephone. 9411 1873
Email: r-raymond@ozemail.com.au

Henry Cranfield, Editor
1/15 Central Road, Beverley Hills 2209
Telephone. 9534 1526
Email: henrycran@telstra.easymail.com.au

Keith McCredden, Functions
Telephone. 9342 0009 (Bus)
Email: keith.mccredden@cwo.com.au

Eamonn Fitzpatrick. Telephone. 9743 3806
Bob Dean & Brian Nell.
Jim Anderson: jimando@integritynet.com.au

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COMING SOCIAL EVENTS.

When : Friday 23rd March 2001
Where: CTA Club Martin Place Sydney
Time : 12 Noon.
Cost : \$ 20 per person. Finger Food

RSVP by 19th March 2001 to:

Keith McCredden 9342 0009 (W)
Laurie McIlree 9339 6923 (W)
Eamonn Fitzpatrick 9743 3806 (H)

MEMBERSHIP FEES.

KINDLY forward to;
Laurie McILLREE. (\$10 includes GST.)

Please check your subscription expiry date on your envelope. As an example 5/01 subs expire May 2001. No information line above your name indicates from our records your subscription has expired.

Vale:

Current Issue:

“Our “ WEB PAGE ADDRESS” is
<http://www.amaze.net.au/~colister>

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OTVA CONSTITUTION.

As most Vet's would be aware, your committee has given a great deal of thought to the constitution of the OTVA and the possibility of amending it to make it more relevant to our operation, as a non-profit association, in the contemporary legal environment. We have also been made aware of some of the potential pitfalls associated with re-drafting the constitution and incorporation of the OTVA as a legal entity. These warnings have made your committee reluctant to recommend such a step at this time. However, we are all very conscious of the shortcomings of the present constitution and the difficulties which it could pose for the future office-bearers of the association. Most significant of these is the a clear statement regarding how the association should be wound up, when there are insufficient members to continue its present functions. This subject, is not covered in our present document.. On a less important issue, a case can be made for us having an elected Vice President, who could step into the role of the President, should he/she be unable to attend any meetings of the committee or perform any other function of that office. Without wishing to put a "death wish" on myself, I would like to see this concept adopted by the membership as soon as possible, ie our next AGM. Therefore, this note is intended to foreshadow to all members that it is the intention of the OTVA committee to prepare a re-draft of the OTVA Constiution, which will be circularised in the Newsletter prior to the 2001 AGM and presented to that AGM, for endorsement by the membership. The question of incorporation of the OTVA will not be a part of this proposal but discussion on that topic will, of course, be possible at that time.

I look forward to the attendance of as many members as possible at the 2001 AGM.

(Date if which is to be advised,)

Tom Barker.

President.

OVERSEAS TELECOMMUNICATIONS VETERANS' ASSOCIATION (W.A.)

Minutes of the 26th AGM Held at Gngangara 28 Nov 2000

President Des Kinnersley opened the meeting at 1pm.

1. President Des welcomed W.A. Veterans Colin Benporath, Ron Cocker, Jim Congdon, Paul Cooper, Heb Farrar, Ron Fisher, Geoff Goddard, Andy Hemus, Reg Jones, Des Kinnersley, John Knight, Sean Leahy, Derek Moore, Barry O'Keeffe, Val Parker, Rod Pernich, George Rogers, Brent Schofield, Bob Smallwood, Tom Swarbrick, Ken True, Derek Walker, Graham Watts and Barry Whittle.
 2. Apologies for absence had been received from Jim Bairstow, Allan Headley, Fred James, Norm Johnstone, Doug Mason, Roger Pugsley, Pat Sykes and Bernd Wendpaap.
 3. One minute's silence was held for WA Veteran Phil Hay, who died during the year.
 4. The Minutes of the 25th AGM were approved.
 5. The Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement were approved.
 6. Election of Office Bearers: President Des Kinnersley and Sec/Treasurer Derek Walker were nominated and re-elected unopposed.
 7. Other Business: Fraternal greetings were passed to the meeting from Harry Stone, S.A. Branch Sec/Treasurer.
 8. The next meeting will be on Tuesday 27 November 2001
- The meeting closed at 1.05pm.

Derek Walker Des Kinnersley
Hon.Sec/Treasurer President

The NASA APOLLO PROJECT (From a earlier Transit article)

The atmosphere at O.T.C's Paddington Terminal was tense in the early hours of Saturday, October 12, 1968. Everyone was waiting for the ARIA program to get under way, but this ARIA had nothing to do with opera. ARIA stands for Apollo Range Instrumented Aircraft, and these played a vital part in the U.S. Apollo 7 three-man space flight-a forerunner to the man- on-the-moon project.

O.T.C, through its Paddington Terminal and radio stations at Doonside and Bringelly were a major participant in the ARIA network. The ARIA aircraft, modified Boeing 707's fitted with extensive radio, tracking and telemetry equipment, were designed to fill in the gaps in global communications coverage both

to and from the Apollo satellite and its three astronauts, Walter Schirra, Donn Eisele and Walter Cunningham.

One of the most significant of these gaps—areas where the spacecraft was out of range of fixed ground and shipboard tracking stations—occurred over the Western Pacific Ocean, North-east of Australia. This was beyond the area scanned by the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration installations at Honeysuckle Creek, Canberra, and Carnarvon, Western Australia.

Another "blind spot" area occurred south-west of Australia beyond the range of the tracking station at Carnarvon. Four ARIA aircraft, with several support aircraft, were brought to Australia for the October flight. Two were stationed at Townsville and two at Darwin. Two were moved to Perth during the latter stages of the 11-day space mission.

The ARIA aircraft, cruising at about 510 m.p.h. at 35,000 to 40,000 feet, acted as relay stations between the Apollo capsule and the ground stations, picking up, through a seven-foot parabolic dish-type antenna in the nose, the micro-wave voice transmissions from the spacecraft and re-transmitting them earthwards via HF radio. The process was reversed for transmitting messages and commands to the astronauts. Telemetry transmissions were also relayed through the aircraft. The O.T.C. Terminal at Paddington was directly in contact with transmitting and receiving stations at Doonside and Bringelly, and with a similar operations centre at Guam in the Marianas Islands. It was linked to the Pacific Sector Control Center in Hawaii, indirectly to a station at Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands and through to Cape Kennedy, Florida and the NASA Manned Spaceflight Control Center at Houston, Texas. Recalling the hectic morning of October 12, Sectional Engineer {Satellites} Mr. Max. Crisp, who co-ordinated O.T.C.'s contribution to ARIA, said wryly, "There were a lot of cups of coffee being drunk at Paddington just before 1:00 a.m. The tension was pretty obvious throughout the whole of the centre," he said. "In the ARIA section, a small glassed-off room crammed with equipment, personnel and maps, the constant flow of countdown and special ARIA information from all over the world built up as zero hour approached.

"The launch took place just before 1:03 a.m. (A.E.S.T.) and then things really started to get busy. They were at their most hectic during the capsule's second orbit when we were handling data from all four aircraft, double our quota, because of poor reception at other stations." The Paddington ARIA complex provided a circuit to the space capsule on the second, third and fourth orbits during the first morning and then every day until October 20, when it was closed down.

Each orbit took about 90 minutes. U.S. Department of Defense Communications representative Mr. J. Nordbusch came to Sydney to oversee the Paddington operation. The Paddington ARIA complex was not required for the re-entry operation, when the spacecraft returned through the earth's atmosphere and plunged into the sea, as this took place over the Atlantic Ocean.

Those directly concerned with the ARIA project at Paddington include Supervising Technicians. Messrs J.N. Hodgson, B.W. Collett, J. Neylon, A.H. Griffiths and J.A. Rodda. Installation of the special equipment, some of which was supplied by the U.S. Government, was organised by Engineer Mr. Greg. Nichols. Also closely involved with the project were the technical staff at Bringelly and Doonside receiving and transmitting stations and the Paddington Terminal.

After the mission Mr. Lacey E. Nunn of the U.S. Air Force Eastern Test Range Communications Division congratulated all those who took part in the Pacific Sector of the ARIA program. He said that the results had been much better than could possibly have been expected. Singling them out for special mention, he said that the O.T.C. staff at Sydney had done "a real fine job", particularly considering their comparative lack of practice in this type of exercise.

TRAINING.

An O.T.C. man was flown to the United States to take part in a special training course in preparation for the ARIA program. He is Supervising Technician Mr. B. W. Collett who is stationed at Paddington. During the course, last February, Bruce was taken for a flight in one of the ARIA aircraft which later came to Australia for the October Apollo mission. The week-long training school took place at the Patrick Airforce base, 20 miles south of Cape Kennedy on the Florida peninsula. The base is the headquarters of the worldwide ARIA operation." Patrick air base is a huge place," Bruce said, "and you can drive for miles inside its boundaries. "And you would be amazed at the number of people tied up with ARIA." Bruce said that while on the demonstration flight they tracked an actual missile in flight. "it seemed appropriate, for me anyway, that the missile was a Polaris launched by the submarine H.M.S. 'Resolution' off the U.S. coast." We picked it up and tracked it right to the splashdown point just north of Puerto Rico." There were normally 11 crew men on the

ARIA aircraft. Four of these were engaged on operations relating to the actual flying of the aircraft while the rest were concerned with the plane's extensive electrical equipment. Bruce flew to and from the States and, because of the pressure of the course, had very little time for sightseeing while he was there." But I did have a three-day stopover at Honolulu on the way back," he said. There he visited the ARIA Pacific sector control station at Wheeler airforce base and "other points of interest

TELEVISION

Although the ARIA unit at Paddington closed down on October 20, O.T.C. had yet another role to play in the Apollo 7 drama. A couple of days later-at about 9.30 p.m. on the 22nd, A.E.S.T. two international telecasts of the Apollo's splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean were beamed through the Moree Earth Station. One of the telecasts was live and the other was a video-tape replay from the United States. To receive the telecasts, the huge Moree dish had to be moved and lined up on another satellite. Normally aligned with Intelsat 11 F4, the fourth of this series to be launched, for the telecast the dish was aimed at Intelsat 11 F2, the second in the series and the first to be placed over the Pacific Ocean. F2 is used mainly for services between the Philippines, Hawaii and Thailand and has some spare capacity. The program was transmitted through a portable earth station set up at Lona Prieta, 30 miles north of the Mexican border on the U.S. west coast for Olympic Games telecast to Japan.

TRANSFER TRAUMAS

By Derek Moore, CRS 1964 to Maritime 1993

Each of my transfers had its moments! Perhaps some of the episodes I relate will trigger **'fond'** memories for CRS members or those from other work areas who also went through traumas of their own as a consequence of being transferred! Wouldn't be at all surprised if others could tell even more horrendous stories than mine. In CRS transfers from one station to another were regular and comparatively frequent occurrences for many in the Service. My family and/or I suffered a trauma of some kind each time whether as a consequence of being in the wrong place at the "right" time during the transfer, whether due to the conditions of the transfer itself, or whatever....My second Transfer Trauma ... read on...

This transfer entailed going from VIA to VID late in 1968. I had no objection to this move as such. I knew I had to do time in the tropics sooner or later. Better to do it while the children were still young. But Head Office decreed this move for mid December and we were to travel

Overland. For any family, but especially one with young children aged between 2 and 6, Christmas is a very special time. What about all the "presies"? So you can imagine the anxiety for my wife (Wendy) and me as we contemplated not only the trauma of getting to Darwin in the heat of mid December with our very active offspring and on arrival there we'd be in a strange place where we knew no one nor where anything was. Darwin in the "wet", and having to put up in a hotel until the chap I was replacing moved out. Also if the same schemozzle occurred with our effects as it did during our first Transfer [see the previous article in this series] we'd be in a right pickle.

Aha! a brainwave (an isolated phenomenon). I wrote to H.O. suggesting that I drive to Darwin alone and Wendy and children fly to Sydney and stay with her parents and aunt over the festive season and fly on up to Darwin in the New Year. Our effects should have arrived by then. I offered to pay for any extra costs entailed in that procedure. Somewhat to my astonishment Head Office agreed with my proposal and didn't even ask for any contribution so I expect the Christmas spirit and an element of common-sense prevailed even in that august edifice.

As it happened a friend from Mount Compass near McLaren Vale (location of VIA) wanted to visit some friends of his in Darwin and offered to come with me in the car. He suggested he bring his girl friend too but as he was a married man my wife took a dim view of this proposal. Up to this point I'd intended driving all the way including the then unsealed long stretch from Port Augusta to Alice. Then the idea came of using the Ghan to Alice. Again H.O. agreed without demur. The friend still wanted to come, even without his solace.

Just before I set off we decided to send our two boys- over to Sydney to stay with grandparents so they were out of Wendy's hair when the packers arrived to move our effects. They were excited at the thought of going on a plane and seeing Nan and Pa again. They'd forgotten their earlier flights - 4 years is a long time for 5 &

6 year olds. However, as we were saying goodbye at Adelaide airport David the older one burst into tears. What's the matter? In a small voice David said - "but I don't know where Nanna and Pa live". He'd thought ahead to arriving in Sydney which amazed us for a youngster his age. He was reassured when we told him Nanna & Pa would be waiting for them at Sydney airport. David and his brother trotted off happily clutching the hands of a hostie who promised them she'd show them the pilots after takeoff. We held our breath as the pilot started up one of the engines just as the boys were boarding but, apart from one fearful look back at us, they entered the plane still holding on tightly to their new friend.

The Ghan in 1969 was still the old train following the original route: 1920s vintage carriages, change of gauge at Maree, and the possibility of getting delayed if the rains were early and washed the line out - likely at the Finke River crossing. This latter threat didn't eventuate and we pulled into the Alice just after nightfall on schedule after a memorable ride up which included a distant view of the Olgas (Kata Tjuta) glowing in the late afternoon sun. Next morning the car was off loaded at the rail yard and after a quick sticky beak of the Alice we headed up the Stuart Highway. I'd previously looked at a map and selected the midway point between Alice and Darwin for the overnight stop and booked accommodation there. This was - and still is I suppose - a minute settlement called Elliott,, on the edge of the Tanami Desert. I've been in some hot places during my Air Force days in Egypt and seafaring years in the Red Sea ports but Elliott took the prize. Never before - nor since - have I experienced such heat. Accommodation was in chalets made of brush walls and iron roofs alongside the only pub in town. We grabbed a tepid shower and headed for the bar. A loud sizzling noise could be heard as the first few beers splashed the sides on the way down to parched stomachs. The car got just one puncture but otherwise the trip from Alice to Darwin was uneventful. Just that heat. Contemplating trying it with Wendy and the three small fly was the stuff of nightmares! The family duly arrived just after New Year. They'd had a great time with the grandparents. Me, I did not enjoy Christmas so much. Alone in a town where I -didn't even know my OTC colleagues very well yet._ _My Parap Hotel/Motel unit was alongside the beer garden and you can imagine the racket emanating from there as I tried to sleep before an early morning shift. A radio up loud tuned off station created a more steady noise pattern to sop up the bursts of drunken hilarity and I did get some sleep thereby. Part of this particular transfer trauma.

In McLaren Vale we'd developed an affection for the Southern Vales plonk as well as the S.A. beers. Packed amongst our effects was a cardboard box holding 4 flagons of assorted wine and a couple of cases of West End beer. The beer arrived intact and was nectar to my palate after swilling lots of Darwin brewed VB - a favoured drop amongst Darwin locals. But the wine.... each flagon had a cork sealed with plastic. The flagons were inside a double strength cardboard box. One of the flagons exploded during the road trip and red wine soaked into our adjoining effects in the pantehnicon. And what were these nearby effects? our mattresses! The truck driver was most apologetic, he thought he'd done the right thing by packing the wine amongst our bedding... For years afterwards until we finally got rid of those mattresses we felt obliged to explain we didn't often have drunken orgies in bed....

How does that transfer compare with yours? The low down on another of mine in a later issue of the Newsletter.